United Nations A/C.3/65/SR.8

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session
Official Records

Distr.: General
27 January 2011
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 11 October 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)

Contents

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women

(a) Advancement of women

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

10-57394 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (A/65/336)

(a) Advancement of women (A/65/38, A/65/208, A/65/209, A/65/218, A/65/268 and A/65/334)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/65/204 and A/C.3/65/L.7)

1. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) congratulated the General Assembly for putting words into action by creating UN-Women and said she was pleased to have been appointed to head the new entity. The establishment of UN-Women marked three major changes. First of all, by placing the entity under the leadership of an Under-Secretary-General, the General Assembly had given the question of gender equality a priority on a par with other development priorities, which was important for the United Nations system but would also have effects on the ground. Secondly, the creation of such an entity represented an important step towards greater coherence and would make it possible to bring together the operational and normative aspects of United Nations support to Member States in order to advance gender equality and give greater strength to the action of United Nations entities. Thirdly, in establishing UN-Women, the General Assembly had acknowledged that investments in the promotion of gender equality must be commensurate with the Organization's vision and with the stakes involved, and that decades of insufficient financing must come to an end. Many countries had agreed to include the promotion of women's rights in their constitutions, laws and policies, yet much remained to be done to move from the inclusion of women's rights in the law to the effective exercise of those rights, from the definition to the practical implementation of policies and strategies for women's empowerment and from declarations to concrete actions to level the playing field and empower women to take full advantage of their rights and contribute as equal partners to all aspects of development.

2. She intended to focus on four main priorities. Firstly, all necessary efforts were being made for the new entity to be operational by 1 January 2011. Secondly, consultation and collaboration with United Nations entities would be strengthened to give more coherence and weight to action carried out in the field of promotion of gender equality. Thirdly, the dialogue must be resumed with the many interested parties that had campaigned vigorously for the establishment of UN-Women in order for the entity's priorities to reflect the expectations of women from every region of the world. Fourthly, it would be essential to reach out to Member States and build new innovative partnerships in order to secure the $500 million deemed necessary by the Secretary-General to finance the start-up phase of UN-Women. As support from Member States would be crucial for responding to those priorities, she looked forward to approval by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposal concerning the regular budget, and in particular the grant modality, to enable UN-Women to become a truly composite entity with a clear identity and a strong esprit de corps. She looked forward to the Economic and Social Council's election of the Executive Board of UN-Women so that it could begin its work without delay. During the coming months, all stakeholders would be consulted with a view to the development of UN-Women's future strategy, the hallmarks of which would be aligned with the entity's founding resolution.

3. Introducing the reports of the offices that currently made up UN-Women, she said that, with regard to violence against women (A/65/208) and trafficking in women and girls (A/65/209), despite the many actions taken by Member States and other stakeholders against those phenomena, they persisted everywhere in the world. She drew attention to the actions and strategies recommended in the two reports. Going on to introduce the report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/65/204), which focused on the progress made by intergovernmental bodies in gender mainstreaming, she emphasized that the Second and Third Committees were those that referred most to gender equality issues and that there was a need for improved monitoring and reporting of progress made in respect of policies, strategies, resource allocation and programmes. Concerning the report on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (A/65/334), which showed mixed results, she drew attention to the good practices identified in the report as well as the recommendations for improving the representation of women in the United Nations system. The note on the

activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (A/65/218) showed that, although UNIFEM had been able to stretch its resources to enable it to provide support to a greater number of countries, it was clear that the demand for United Nations support on gender equality was way beyond the capacity to respond. That, too, added to the case for a strong and effective UN-Women.

4. **Mr. Errazuriz** (Chile), welcoming the historic creation of UN-Women and the fact that its leadership had been entrusted to an eminent Chilean representative, said he hoped the new entity would quickly become operational and would enjoy sustained financing. He asked how his delegation could assist the Under-Secretary-General in her task.

5. **Mr. Kodama** (Japan) assured the Under-Secretary-General of his country's collaboration and asked what the priorities of the new entity would be.

6. **Ms. Fulp** (United States) pointed out that women's rights were the measure of the well-being of societies and assured Ms. Bachelet of her country's support.

7. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic), assuring the Under-Secretary-General of her country's collaboration, said she hoped the creation of a focal point charged with the question of the fate of women living under occupation would be contemplated within the new entity.

8. **Ms. Hadid** (Australia) said she would like to know the future priorities of UN-Women and how her country could help to implement them, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

9. **Mr. Glaufret** (European Union) said he expected the creation of UN-Women would make it possible to close the gap between the Organization's normative and operational work in the areas of gender equality and empowerment of women and to enhance the coherence and efficacy of the action carried out. He asked what the new entity's priorities for the next few years would be and how the Under-Secretary-General planned to organize collaboration between UN-Women and other United Nations bodies whose action related directly or indirectly to gender equality and empowerment of women.

10. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia), recalling the role played by his country in the process leading to the election of the Executive Board of UN-Women, said he would like to learn what the Executive Director intended to do to address the problems posed in all countries, including developed countries, considering that the action of the country teams was currently focused on developing countries.

11. **Ms. Brichta** (Brazil) would like to know the future priorities of UN-Women, in particular for the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

12. **Mr. Siddique** (Pakistan) said he wished to learn how the Executive Director meant to elaborate a consistent strategy for the advancement of women while taking into account the cultural perspectives of the different regions of the world.

13. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), replying to the delegations' questions, said that the four entities that would thenceforward make up UN-Women had contributed greatly to the advancement of women and that many countries had adopted laws, policies and strategies of major importance, even if their implementation was not always satisfactory. Much more must be done, especially on the ground, to solve the most urgent and most complicated problems. At the start of 2011 UN-Women would define its priorities, taking into account all the expectations of the Member States and the perspectives of both local women's organizations and the entities of the United Nations system. UN-Women was not intended to replace the action that other components of the system carried on to promote empowerment of women and gender equality, but to work with them in their respective fields of competence to find solutions to specific problems such as sexual violence, the situation of women in the occupied territories or the health of the girl child. Its purpose was to strengthen coordination and synergy within the system, both at Headquarters and in the field, so as to make it possible to obtain the desired results while respecting the specificities of each entity.

14. UN-Women had already set itself a number of priorities. In the first place, it was determined to give women's organizations an opportunity to be heard, so as to gain a clear idea of the condition in which women lived, inasmuch as their situation might differ significantly from one region to another and from country to country. Two other priority areas called for prompt action: first, violence against women, not only in developing countries, countries under occupation or

countries in conflict, but also in developed countries; and second, women's and children's health, for, despite the efforts made, in some parts of the world little had been achieved. That absence of results was unacceptable when there was no doubt as to the measures to be taken and the resources to be allocated to achieving goals 4 and 5 of the Millennium Development Goals. Action must also be taken to promote empowerment of women worldwide. In Latin America, for example, much remained to be done to make gender equality a reality and improve respect for women's rights and it was vital to work for their economic empowerment. As everywhere else in the world, women there were highly productive and played a key role in development as well as in the area of emergency relief. UN-Women greatly counted on support from Member States to enable it to strengthen its capacities in the field and truly fulfil its mission. It would formulate various requests as it became fully operational.

15. **Ms. Mballa** (Cameroon) noted the importance Ms. Bachelet accorded to action on the ground and would like to know what would be done, in particular, for rural women, who, though they constituted a considerable part of the population in developing countries, were often neglected.

16. **Ms. Arias** (Peru) said she would like to know how the Executive Director intended to strengthen the role of UN-Women in the field in order to continue to work for the advancement of women and women's rights.

17. **Ms. Sunkavalli** (India) asked how the Under-Secretary-General planned to improve coordination between the different United Nations agencies active in the promotion of women's issues so that more women were appointed to senior executive posts within the United Nations.

18. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) said she was convinced that the experience acquired by Ms. Bachelet as President of Chile would be invaluable for addressing the problems of middle-income countries, which included a sizeable number of the countries of Latin America.

19. **Ms. Werdaningtyas** (Indonesia) asked how UN-Women planned to intensify its cooperation with regional organizations such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

20. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) said that the United Nations system comprised many different entities, most of which conducted activities that contributed directly or indirectly to gender equality, but that only 6 per cent of the total resources of the system were allocated to such activities. That was a problem that absolutely must be solved, given the key role that women played in development, especially in rural areas. Strengthening action for the advancement of women conducted in the field would take different forms and would be based on existing structures, such as the vast network of offices which UNIFEM had in many countries. It was not a question of building a parallel system, but of collaborating closely with all the entities already present on the ground so as to avoid overlapping activities and improve the existing mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The goal was to establish activities and strategies common to all levels, be it at Headquarters or at the regional, national and local levels. She knew she could count on the support of States and pointed out that the world's women were looking to UN-Women, but also to States, to move forward their cause.

21. **The Chair** assured Ms. Bachelet of the Committee's confidence and said he was convinced that she had the necessary enthusiasm and vision for the success of her mission.

22. **Ms. Mane** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), introducing the report on efforts to end obstetric fistula (A/65/268), said that, while that scourge had been virtually eliminated in industrialized nations, it still afflicted more than 2 million women in the developing world. Its persistence was explainable in terms not only of problems of access to health care, but also of broader economic and sociocultural inequities, poverty, gender equalities and early marriage. During the previous two years, considerable progress had been made, due mainly to more effective interventions, enhanced data collection and analysis, advocacy programmes, partnerships such as the inter-agency group H4+ and stronger political and financial commitments. The midterm review of the Campaign to End Fistula showed that additional resources and intensified efforts were required at all levels. Like maternal mortality, obstetric fistula was almost entirely preventable where there was universal and equitable access to quality reproductive health

care. UNFPA joined the Secretary-General in calling on the international community to devote increased funding to goal 5 of the Millennium Development Goals.

23. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) enquired about the examples of good practices mentioned briefly in the report and about how the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health launched by the Secretary-General would contribute to the Campaign to End Fistula, especially with regard to the stigma and discrimination to which the women continued to be subject.

24. **Ms. Mane** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund) suggested, with regard to the question of good practices, consulting other publications that provided more detail on the subject. As for the Global Strategy, she was convinced it would have an extremely beneficial effect on all aspects of maternal health thanks to the awareness-raising campaigns being conducted worldwide. Obstetric fistula was a very clear example of the ease with which a whole set of maternal health problems could be prevented and of how little was done to that end. The objective was to encourage countries to launch a prevention campaign to put an end to child marriage and facilitate women's access to surgical and obstetric care. Obstetric fistula could be treated medically, but the major problem resided in cultural beliefs that surrounded it, resulting in stigma and discrimination. The agencies of the United Nations system and their partners must therefore devote a considerable portion of their resources to educating communities in the prevention of fistula and making them understand that it could be treated and that it was important to accept the victims and allow them to receive the care they needed.

25. **Ms. Manjoo** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences), referring to the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, said that, like many defenders of human rights, she considered violence against women the "missing goal" and called for a stepping-up of efforts to apply laws, policies and programmes aimed at preventing violence against women. Introducing her first thematic report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/14/22), which addressed the issue of reparations to women who had been subjected to violence, she explained that the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law defined the contours of State responsibility for providing reparation to victims for acts or omissions attributable to the State. States must exercise due diligence to eliminate, reduce and mitigate the incidence and consequences of discrimination. The obligation to provide reparation, however, which was recognized by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, was seldom implemented, even as women were the target of both sex-specific and other forms of violence whose origin frequently lay in pre-existing patterns of structural subordination and systemic marginalization. Hence, measures must be taken to address both individual reparation and the structural factors that made violations of women's rights possible.

26. On the subject of country visits, the Special Rapporteur said that in November 2009 she had been to Kyrgyzstan, where important measures, legislative in particular, had been adopted to improve the status of women and protect their fundamental rights. Such measures by themselves did not suffice to remedy the root causes, and the consequences of discrimination and various forms of violence, such as domestic violence, bride-kidnapping, trafficking, custodial violence, sexual violence and harassment against lesbians, remained unreported and unpunished. In addition, other social phenomena, such as the feminization of poverty, social acceptance of certain forms of violence and a resurgence of patriarchal practices, were rendering women more vulnerable. She had recommended the strengthening of the machinery for the protection of women, including the establishment of an independent body responsible for women's rights and gender equality, and encouraged the Government to make budgetary commitments towards the implementation of programmes relating to gender equality and the socio-economic status and rights of women. Following the inter-ethnic violence of June 2010, which had included physical and sexual attacks against women and girls, she hoped that no efforts would be spared to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice. In March 2009 she had been to El Salvador to review the progress made on the recommendations of her predecessor and assess the current situation and the measures taken by the State to solve the problems of violence against women. She applauded the national law reform proposals relating to violence against women, gender equality and the promotion and protection of the rights of children and adolescents, as well as the ongoing discussions on the

ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Rome Treaty. She was concerned, however, at the rise in the number of murders of women and girls and the persistence of numerous other forms of violence that were widespread. A full report on the visit would be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2011. Before the end of 2010 she would visit Algeria and Zambia; a visit to the United States of America was planned for January 2011; and she was awaiting responses from other countries that had been contacted.

27. She had also contributed to the second report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights and the activities of her Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/HRC/13/64), highlighting the lack of progress since the initial report and denouncing the persistence of violence against women, in particular rape and gang rape, including in areas not affected by armed conflict, and discriminatory laws and practices. She condemned in the strongest terms the horrible acts of sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups against hundreds of women and girls in Walikale territory in August 2010 and recalled that the primary responsibility for preventing such acts and protecting the population lay with the Government.

28. She had continued to strengthen cooperation with intergovernmental expert bodies tasked with monitoring the situation of women's rights. She had presented a report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-fourth session and held consultations with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) regarding greater cooperation between the two mandates. In addition, she had participated in conferences, colloquiums and consultations on various issues related to violence against women, in particular the phenomenon of femicide in Latin America, discrimination and violence against migrant domestic workers and human rights in humanitarian emergency response.

29. Concerning the adoption by the Human Rights Council of its resolution 15/17, on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights, during her mandate she would continue the efforts made to address the root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity, including discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls. Furthermore, in the light of the numerous allegations she received concerning violence against women defenders of human rights, she looked forward to collaboration with the Special Rapporteur appointed by the Council in its resolution 15/21 on the rights of peaceful assembly and of association and with the five independent experts of the working group created by that resolution to facilitate the exchange of best practices regarding the elimination of laws that discriminated against women.

30. The communications contained in her report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/14/22/Add.1) revealed major trends, in particular more and more widespread sexual violence and an increase in cases of violence against women human rights defenders; the interaction of multiple forms of discrimination; the failure of States to prevent and suppress violence against women; and the difficulties posed by discriminatory laws and other legal provisions that might give rise to such violence. Her next thematic report to the Council would address the challenges posed by the interaction of multiple, pervasive and systemic forms of discrimination and their nexus with violence against women.

31. She stressed that every day women and girls struggled for the right to a life free of violence and that it was incumbent on everyone to seek the means to put an end to the most prevalent and pervasive form of human rights violation.

32. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland) asked how the United Nations could help Member States to strengthen their national programmes to combat violence against women and whether access to best practices and lessons learned could be better institutionalized based on data collected in response to questionnaires or previous assessments. Concerning UN-Women, he wanted to know in which fields the new entity would interact with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Finally, he said that Switzerland was deeply concerned by the unacceptable sexual violence committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and asked if the United Nations presence in the country could take extra steps to better protect civilian populations.

33. **Ms. Mundebele** (Swaziland) stressed that her country attached great importance to the role of the family in the struggle against violence against women and asked what programmes could be established to strengthen the structure of the family through education and aware-raising of the issue.

34. **Ms. Hadid** (Australia) asked if there were success indicators that could effectively measure the long-term impact of measures to prevent violence against women and said that her country was working to draft a national plan to reduce violence against women and children that would be based on a number of indicators to measure progress.

35. **Mr. Giaufret** (European Union) explained that the European Union was in the process of drafting a global strategy to strengthen the scope and effectiveness of the campaign against violence against women within its borders. He asked the Special Rapporteur how, in her opinion, UN-Women could best contribute in operational terms to efforts to combat violence against women and what could be done to strengthen the coordination of the work by the different entities involved in combating violence against women in order to improve the effectiveness of United Nations activities, and finally, how she envisaged her cooperation with the new Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice.

36. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba) requested further information on the measures and initiatives implemented by Member States to prevent violence against women and on which steps gave the best results, and wanted to know what role the educational system could play in the prevention of violence against women.

37. **Ms. Boisclair** (Canada) stressed the importance of country visits and encouraged all Member States to send a standing invitation to the Special Rapporteur. Her country welcomed the cooperation that the Special Rapporteur intended to establish with the new Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice, and wanted to know what would be the subject of the Special Rapporteur's following thematic report, recalling Canada's view that the interaction of many forms of systematic violence against women was an issue that must be addressed in detail.

38. **Mr. Siddique** (Pakistan), referring to paragraph 44 of report A/HRC/14/22, in which the types of violence traditionally excluded from compensation programmes were mentioned, requested clarifications on the concept of serious violations of social, economic and cultural rights and on how the victims of such violations would be identified.

39. **Ms. Manjoo** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences) said that, in terms of States' due diligence, the issues of prevention, protection, suppression and compensation were clearly defined in international law. However, not enough had been done to establish how Member States and civil society understood due diligence and she would address that shortcoming. Regarding best practices, there were examples around the globe but they had been poorly documented and she appealed to Member States to improve their response rates to questionnaires. The struggle against violence against women had focused on legislation and policies and had not addressed implementation adequately. Furthermore, social, economic and cultural problems must also be addressed, and the role of the family must be taken into account in order to determine which solutions to apply in local contexts. A further major challenge lay in the fact that other forms of violence were revealed when combating the problem of gender inequality. Accordingly, encouraging women to participate in political life also exposed them to violence.

40. Referring to UN-Women, the Special Rapporteur was looking forward to seeing how she would fit into the work of the entity. Concerning the usefulness of special procedures, she constantly encouraged civil society to find concrete applications for the reports which they issued.

41. **Mr. Saadi** (Algeria), welcoming the forthcoming visit to his country by the Special Rapporteur and assuring her of his Government's cooperation, asked if there were reliable indicators or statistics, from sources other than the legal sphere, on violence against women. He also asked what role civil society could play in the area of awareness-raising to end such violence.

42. **Mr. Stenvold** (Norway) stressed the need for social transformation to improve gender equality. He asked how awareness of the issue could be raised among men and boys.

43. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile), referring to the fate of women killed by their husbands who had been released on probation, wanted to know what specific protection measures the Special Rapporteur recommended.

44. **Mr. Olukanni** (Nigeria) wanted to learn of the different experiences that had been gained in the field of education and at what educational level it was best to start talking about the subject of gender equality. He stressed the importance of having best practices in that regard. Where political activities were concerned, he suggested that solutions encouraging women's participation should be found.

45. **Ms. Manjoo** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences), responding to representatives' questions, said that indicators on sexist violence were incomplete, inasmuch as they ignored the human aspect. The figures obtained must take into account such measures as increases in budgets to combat gender-based violence. Concerning the role of education, States did not systematically include the teaching of women and girls' human rights in school curricula. Civil society initiatives were very important in that regard, but were inadequate. Referring to the question by the representative of Nigeria, she said that such education must begin in primary school. Civil education must recognize, promote and protect the rights of all but it often included religion while not necessarily including human rights and the respect for dignity. Since violence against women was also a political, civil, economic, social and cultural issue, it was not enough merely to criminalize it: it must also be tackled through the participation of all sectors of society. Furthermore, when donors redirected their attention to men and boys, funds for women's rights organizations were often wrongly cut. Such organizations, which were not funded by national authorities, depended heavily on foreign financing and found it hard to survive in a local context.

46. The issue of women killed by men on probation was an aspect of due diligence, which comprised the obligation to protect, prevent and punish. The criminal justice system had a duty to carry out investigations to guarantee the personal safety of those concerned, because individuals released on probation or bail could move back into their communities and endanger women, especially those with the courage to take legal action. Regarding the roles reserved for men and women in our societies, stereotypes must be combated within the family, the community, society, the educational system and in politics. While women were encouraged to participate in politics and greater representation was called for, the essential enabling environment was not being created.

47. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao (Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) introduced the Committee's report (A/65/38). She urged all States that had not yet ratified the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol to do so and encouraged States with reservations to those instruments to withdraw them. She said that the Committee was grateful to the General Assembly for having granted it, through resolution 62/218, three annual sessions for an interim period effective from January 2010, pending entry into force of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as that had allowed the Committee to reduce the backlog of reports awaiting examination. The Committee was aware that its timely consideration of submissions motivated States to present their reports in accordance with the terms of the Convention and it was therefore continually examining ways of streamlining its working methods to prevent a backlog of reports awaiting consideration. The Committee had systematically reminded States with long-overdue reports to submit them within a specific time frame, which had led to the submission of 15 new reports. In order to enhance its working methods, the Committee had adopted a new follow-up procedure in its concluding observations: it now noted two concerns requiring priority actions on which the State party should provide information within one or two years. The new procedure would allow the Committee to maintain close dialogue with States parties on urgent issues and help them to implement their obligations under the Convention. The Committee was also reviewing the format, content and length of its concluding observations in order to make them more effective.

48. The Committee was expanding the range of stakeholders with which it sought to implement the Convention. Although implementation was primarily the responsibility of States parties, input from non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and parliamentarians was also encouraged. The Committee welcomed the creation of UN-Women and looked forward to establishing strong ties with the entity, as it had with other women's rights experts. The Committee had taken note of the establishment of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice and would be pleased to cooperate with it, although it had some concerns regarding possible overlapping of their mandates.

49. The Committee continued to draft general recommendations in respect of the interpretation of provisions of the Convention. It was currently preparing four draft general recommendations, which it hoped to adopt soon, relating to: the interpretation of article 2 of the Convention; older women and the protection of their rights; the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution; and harmful practices. With a view to promoting women's rights in all

situations, the Committee was continuing its practice of issuing statements related to specific events, including on the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 and on the inclusion of women in the peacebuilding and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. Experts from the Committee had attended many meetings to speak about issues such as discrimination against women in law and practice, the effects of climate change on women and harmful traditional practices.

50. The Convention and the Committee had made impressive progress. The Convention was well on the road to universal adherence, and many reservations had been withdrawn. The Committee had become the legitimate and respected voice for women's human rights by helping States parties to comply with their treaty obligations, promoting legal and policy reform, and influencing international jurisprudence. The challenges remaining were essentially related to applying the Convention at the national level. Those included the persistence of stereotypes, discrimination and violence as well as discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

51. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland) said that his Government supported the Committee's efforts to consider new working methods that would lead to more concrete applications of its concluding observations. He inquired as to the current status of the measures designed to strengthen the implementation of the Committee's recommendations to countries following the presentation of their national reports. He also wished to know how UN-Women could assist States in complying with their reporting obligations and, in particular, with their obligations to implement the Convention and the Committee's recommendations.

52. **Ms. Hadid** (Australia) asked the Vice-Chair what areas of domestic legislation States parties should review as a matter of priority in order to fulfil their commitment to improving women's economic security.

53. **Ms. Boisclair** (Canada) said that her Government welcomed the Committee's efforts to improve its working methods. She asked what could be done to strengthen the contributions of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions to the Committee's work; what measures States could take to improve reporting on their follow-up to Committee recommendations; and how States could simplify their reports while still providing the required information.

54. **Mr. Giaufret** (European Union) requested more details as to the Committee's efforts to identify areas of mutual concern with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and initiatives to develop cooperation between the two committees, as well as information as to how the Committee would collaborate with UN-Women and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice to promote gender equality.

55. **Ms. Werdaningtyas** (Indonesia) said that the issue of violence against women was of special concern to her Government. Countries of origin, transit and destination all bore a responsibility to protect women migrant workers and coordination between them therefore needed to be strengthened. She requested details on the mechanisms used to end violence against women migrant workers. She also asked the Vice-Chair to share information that had been provided by destination countries regarding implementation of the Committee's general recommendation No. 26.

56. **Ms. Oladipo** (Nigeria) said that persisting patriarchal stereotypes in her country made it difficult to integrate provisions of the Convention into domestic law and asked how the Committee could support States in overcoming such challenges.

57. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao (Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), responding to the questions from delegations, said that the Committee would need the support of UN-Women in implementing the Convention, given that, while the Committee could give technical assistance to States, it did not have special funds allocated for that purpose. Likewise, the Committee would welcome cooperation with the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice, especially since the Committee itself also worked to fight discriminatory laws and practices. In that regard, the new working methods that it had adopted helped States parties to advance in key areas, including the reform of legislation on women's rights and gender-based violence. In terms of the issues which States should address as a matter of priority, she said that each country had specific problems and the Committee would make recommendations as to which areas of domestic legislation required priority attention after having considered that country's individual report. In many countries, stereotypes and discriminatory laws on inheritance and land rights, among other issues, were a

major obstacle to the full exercise of women's rights. Regarding the role of civil society, the Committee encouraged non-governmental organizations to present reports on the implementation of the Convention and also requested national human rights institutions to provide information. General recommendation No. 26 was a key instrument in addressing violence against women migrant workers, and she hoped that all States parties would ensure its implementation. The Committee would strive to work together with other agencies and to secure more financial support in order to provide the best assistance possible to States parties, particularly in terms of offering detailed guidance that responded to the specific context in each country.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.